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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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HPL
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Memorandum of Conversation

DATE:

May 20, 1958

SUBJECT:

Invitation to Participate in Yugoslav World War II
Celebration

PARTICIPANTS:

Mr. Primozic, Yugoslav Minister
Foy D. Kohler, EUR

COPIES TO:

EE, P, IES, G, S/EWC

1-1493

Mr. Primozic called on me at 4 p.m. today at his request.

He said that he had a very pleasant duty to perform. He said that the Yugoslav Government is planning on July 4, 1958 to organize a big celebration of the 15th anniversary of the Battle of the Sutjeska River which took place on July 4, 1943. This was the fifth German campaign of World War II in Yugoslavia. It was the last German attempt to seek out and destroy the partisans; thereafter the Germans retired to the protection of the lines of communication except for occasional raids directed against the staff headquarters of the partisans. Thus the Yugoslav partisans consider that this encounter was the turning point of the war for them. A preparatory committee under the Presidency of Marshal Tito has been set up to make the arrangements for the celebration. On behalf of the preparatory committee Mr. Primozic said that he had been instructed to invite two Americans to participate from among the officers who had been members of the US Allied Missions attached to partisan

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2

headquarters. He said that two British officers and two Russian officers would also be invited. The participants would be the guests of the Yugoslav Government and the committee would defray all their expenses from the point of entry into Yugoslavia to point of departure.

The selection of the participants, Mr. Primozic said, would be up to the American Government. However, in reply to my inquiry he did mention the names of Ellery Huntington, then Chief of the US Mission and now a business man, and a Mr. Lindsay, a former member of the Mission stationed in Slovenia, as two officers who, to his knowledge, had retained a continuing interest in Yugoslav affairs.

Mr. Primozic said he would appreciate it very much if we could reply by about the end of the month.

I told Mr. Primozic that I was very glad to receive the invitation. I personally thought it sounded like a very fitting celebration of an anniversary of mutual interest. I accordingly hoped it would be possible for us to participate.

I would get in touch with the people in the government who dealt with such matters and who, I hoped, might have the necessary funds and would give him an answer as soon as possible.

RUR:FLKohler:ban

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